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man, and the flimsiest peg was good enough for his enemies. As a matter of fact, with respect to "Germinal," he gave nearly six months to personal study of his subject on the spot, and though he derived a few incidents, as he was well entitled to do, from, officially recorded instances of the horrors and dangers of the pitman's life,¹ his work well deserved to "be regarded not only as an original one but even as a *livre vecu*. When "Germinal" appeared as a volume there was a large demand for it, though its circulation did not approach that of "L'Assommoir" or "Nana." This has surprised several writers on Zola, who hold "Germinal" to be his masterpiece; but it has already been pointed out in these pages that his sales had been declining for some time past, books like "Pot-Bouille" having angered many of his readers. It was hardly to be expected that he would regain all his lost ground at one leap, and under the circumstances the reception given, to "Germinal" was distinctly cheering. Moreover, whereas there had been no popular illustrated edition of "Au Bonheur des Dames" or "La Joie de Vivre," one of "Germinal" in parts soon made its appearance, and sold very widely, in such wise that the full extent of the book's circulation

cannot be gauged by M. Charpentier's printings.²

¹ For instance, the horrible experiences of Etienne Lantier in the Voreux pit towards the close of the book were based on those of a miner walled up in a Lyons pit in 1854, and on those of a pitman of the Gard, described by M. Parran, an engineer, in the "Bulletin de la Societe de l'Industrie Miniere." That narrative suggested the idea of the floating corpse in the inundated mine.

³ "Germinal," Paris, Charpentier, 1885, 581 pages. Eighty-eighth, thousand in 1893 ; one hundred and tenth thousand in 1903. Some copies on Japanese, Dutch, and India papers. Illustrated edition: Paris, Librairie J. B. Bailliere, n. d., quarto, titles, five hundred pages; wood-engravings after Ferat; one hundred and fifty copies on Dutch, paper. This edition like others is now sold by E. Mammion, successor of Marpon and Hammarion, Eue Racine, Paris..